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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	ACDE-00	AID-00	ARA-01	A-00	CA-02
	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	OASY-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-01	EUR-01	FAAE-00
	FBIE-00	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	LAB-01
	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NEA-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OCS-03	OIS-01	OMB-01	PA-02	PM-00	PRS-01	P-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	USSS-00
	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-09	G-00	/045W	
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P 031858Z OCT 95  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8255  
INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 006166

**SENSITIVE**

DEPARTMENT FOR ARA/BSC, S/CT

E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: PTER, PREL, IR, AR  
SUBJECT: AMIA HEARING GENERATES POLITICAL CONTROVERSY;  
UNCLASSIFIED

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- PROSECUTORS MAKE NEW ARRESTS  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON  
DATE/CASE ID: 13 MAY 2008 200601030

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REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 6019, (B) BUENOS AIRES 5073

1. DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT - SENSITIVE BUT  
UNCLASSIFIED - PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

2. SUMMARY: ARGENTINE REACTIONS TO THE US CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE 1994 BOMBING OF THE ARGENTINE JEWISH MUTUAL ASSOCIATION (AMIA) HAVE BEEN SHARP AND MOSTLY NEGATIVE. MOST GOA COMMENTS ARE FOCUSING ON THE EXTREMELY CRITICAL REMARKS OF BUENOS AIRES JEWISH LEADER RUBEN BERAJA AND HIS ALLEGATION THAT THE GOA IS PURSUING A POLICY OF APPEASEMENT WITH IRAN TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER ATTACK. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED PARTS OF AMBASSADOR WILCOX'S TESTIMONY OUT OF CONTEXT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE USG UNFAIRLY CONDEMNED ARGENTINE ACTIONS IN THE AMIA CASE DURING THE HEARING. EMBASSY IS GIVING WIDE CIRCULATION TO A USIS SPANISH LANGUAGE TRANSLATION OF WILCOX'S REMARKS TO COUNTER THIS SELECTIVE REPORTING. THE AMBASSADOR HAS ALSO ACCENTUATED OUR COOPERATIVE BILATERAL EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE CRIME. THE GOVERNMENT, MEANWHILE, HAS ARRESTED FOUR SUSPECTS LINKED TO POSSIBLE FINANCING OF THE ATTACK. DETAINED SUSPECT CARLOS TELLELDIN'S WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH INVESTIGATORS REPORTEDLY DEPENDS ON PROTECTION FOR HIS FAMILY. END SUMMARY.

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PRESS SEIZES A WINNING STORY  
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3. AFTER FAIRLY MUTED REPORTING IN BUENOS AIRES DAILIES LAST FRIDAY, OVER THE WEEKEND PRESS COVERAGE OF THE TESTIMONY GIVEN AT THE HEARING IN THE US CONGRESS ON THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE AMIA ATTACK BECAME ALMOST VITRIOLIC. MOST ARTICLES FOCUSED ON REACTIONS TO CRITICISM OF THE GOA'S HANDLING OF THE INVESTIGATION BY JEWISH LEADER RUBEN BERAJA, WHO HAS ACCUSED FOREIGN MINISTER DI TELLA OF PURSUING A POLICY

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OF APPEASEMENT WITH IRAN AT THE EXPENSE OF PROGRESS IN THE CASE AND BRINGING THOSE GUILTY TO JUSTICE. BERAJA CLAIMS THAT VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FERNANDO PETRELLA TOLD HIM IN THE PRESENCE OF SIX WITNESSES THAT THE GOA MUST AVOID OFFENDING IRAN TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE ATTACKS. YET BERAJA'S VIEWS DO NOT REPRESENT THE ENTIRE JEWISH COMMUNITY; [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] FOR EXAMPLE, HAS DIFFERED SUBSTANTIALLY FROM BERAJA ON HOW DIRECT A CONNECTION MAY EXIST BETWEEN THE BOMBING AND IRANIAN DIPLOMATS.

4. VICE MINISTER PETRELLA HAS JUMPED INTO THE FRAY AND DISPUTED BERAJA'S ACCUSATIONS. PETRELLA NOTED THAT THE GOA HAS NEVER SUBMITTED NOR WILL SUBMIT TO TERRORIST THREATS IN CONDUCTING ITS FOREIGN POLICY. IN ADDITION, COVERAGE OF THE HEARING BEGAN TO INCLUDE QUOTES FROM AMBASSADOR WILCOX'S TESTIMONY TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT, PARTICULARLY HIS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT LITTLE OR NO PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN SOLVING THE 1992 BOMBING OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY OR THE AMIA CASE, AND HIS COMMENTS THAT ARGENTINE POLICE LACK THE TOOLS

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TO CONDUCT THOROUGH INVESTIGATIONS OF SUCH COMPLEX  
CRIMES AS THESE BOMBINGS.

5. OVER THE WEEKEND, THE VOLLEYS IN THE PRESS ESCALATED. PRESIDENT MENEM, WHO IS IN THE FAR EAST FOR VISITS TO SOUTH KOREA AND CHINA, WAS QUOTED AS DESCRIBING THE TESTIMONY IN THE HEARING AS "DISPROPORTIONATELY AGGRESSIVE." MENEM SAID HE WAS CONSIDERING HAVING THE FOREIGN MINISTRY PREPARE A FORMAL RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE'S HEARING. MENEM FURTHER OBJECTED TO CRITICISMS OF GOA INEFFECTIVENESS IN THE INVESTIGATION BY SAYING THAT THE SAME MIGHT BE SAID OF "THE RECENT CASE IN OKLAHOMA," REFERRING TO THE BOMBING OF THE US FEDERAL BUILDING THERE EARLIER THIS YEAR. MEN  
EM HAS SINCE TEMPERED HIS INITIAL  
REACTION TO WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS OF THE TESTIMONY.

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MORE JOIN IN THE ACTION

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6. FOREIGN MINISTER DI TELLA, IN NEW YORK FOR UNGA  
ACTIVITIES, ALSO FIRMLY REJECTED BERAJA'S CLAIMS OF  
ANY EASING UP ON THE AMIA INVESTIGATION TO PLACATE  
IRAN. DI TELLA CALLED BERAJA'S REMARKS ON APPEASEMENT

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	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	OASY-00	DODE-00
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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 006166

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR ARA/BSC, S/CT

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"UNJUST AND INEXACT," BUT DID NOT EXPLICITLY DENY THE CONVERSATION REPORTED BY BERAJA. DI TELLA INSTEAD NOTED THAT THE GOA HAS BROUGHT THE AMIA CASE TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND PROPOSED CONCRETE MEASURES AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. HE ALSO SAID THAT ARGENTINA REJECTS CONDITIONING FOREIGN POLICY ON "BLACKMAIL BY TERRORISTS" AS THAT WOULD MERELY HELP TERRORISTS IN ACHIEVING THEIR OBJECTIVE OF UNDERMINING THE RULE OF LAW AND DEMOCRACY.

7. PICKING UP ON THE PRESS PLAY, OPPOSITION LEADER CARLOS "CHACHO" ALVAREZ HAS RENEWED HIS EFFORTS TO MOTIVATE ARGENTINE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION IN THE AMIA CASE. COMPLAINING THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION CONGRESSIONAL ADVICE ON THE CASE, HE IS PRESSING FOR THE CREATION OF AN INVESTIGATORY COMMISSION TO PROD THE GOVERNMENT.

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MORE DEVELOPMENTS ON TELLEDIN  
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8. JUDGE LUISA RIVA ARAMAYO, REPORTED IN REF A TO HAVE HELD SECRET MEETINGS WITH CARLOS TELLEDIN, HAS BEEN ORDERED TO RECUSE HERSELF FROM THE CASE BY HER FELLOW JUDGES. JUDGE JUAN PEDRO CORTELEZZI HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN CONDEMNING RIVA ARAMAYO'S ACTIONS, CLAIMING THAT THEY HAVE COMPROMISED THE PANEL WHICH MIGHT HAVE TO HEAR APPEALS ON THE CASE. MEANWHILE,

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THE PRESS CONTINUES TO REPORT THAT TELLELDIN IS  
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CONDITIONING HIS COOPERATION IN THE CASE ON PROTECTION  
FOR HIS FAMILY. TELLELDIN HAS SAID THAT POLICE FROM  
BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE WOULD KILL HIS FAMILY WITHIN A  
WEEK IF HE NAMED THOSE WHO HELPED HIM PROCURE THE  
RENAULT VAN USED IN THE AMIA BOMBING.

9. ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, INVESTIGATORS AND POLICE  
RAIDED SEVERAL BUSINESSES RELATED TO THE AUTO "CHOP  
SHOP" RUN BY TELLELDIN AND ARRESTED FOUR INDIVIDUALS.  
THE RAIDS REPORTEDLY FOCUSED ON COLLECTING DOCUMENTS  
WHICH MAY PROVE THAT A TAX EVASION SCHEME -- POSSIBLY  
INVOLVING UP TO USD 3 MILLION -- WAS USED TO FINANCE  
THE ATTACK ON AMIA LAST JULY. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF TAXATION (DGI) ACCOMPANIED  
POLICE ON THE RAIDS. IN ADDITION, PROSECUTOR EAMON  
MULLEN ANNOUNCED THAT THE INVESTIGATION HAD NOT / NOT  
DROPPED THE HYPOTHESIS THAT IRANIAN DIPLOMATS COULD BE  
INVOLVED AND HINTED THAT THE CRITERIA USED TO  
DETERMINE "PROOF" OF INVOLVEMENT WAS OPEN TO DEBATE.

10. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS FURNISHED ENGLISH AND  
SPANISH VERSIONS OF AMBASSADOR WILCOX'S TESTIMONY TO  
THE PRESS AND TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TO ENSURE THE  
COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF USG VIEWS. WE HAVE ALSO  
DISTRIBUTED THE TEXT WIDELY AMONG MEMBERS OF THE  
ARGENTINE CONGRESS. THE PRESS CONTINUES TO PLAY THE  
STORY FOR ITS SENSATIONAL VALUE, BUT SENIOR GOA  
OFFICIALS HAVE ALREADY LOWERED THE TEMPERATURE OF THE  
DEBATE. PRESIDENT MENEM BLAMED FAULTY PRESS REPORTS  
FOR HIS INITIAL REACTION, AND FOREIGN MINISTER DI  
TELLA SAID HE IS SATISFIED THAT REMARKS OF CERTAIN

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CONGRESSMEN DO NOT REPRESENT WASHINGTON'S OFFICIAL  
VIEW. THE GOA MAY STILL LAUNCH A FORMAL PROTEST, BUT  
IT IS LIKELY TO BE DIRECTED AT PARTICULAR COMMENTS  
MADE AT THE HEARING RATHER THAN AT USG POLICIES OR  
BILATERAL RELATIONS GENERALLY. POST WILL UPDATE AS  
WARRANTED.

11. ADDITIONAL COMMENT: [REDACTED]  
VIEWS REFLECT THE ORGANIZATION'S MORE MEASURED STANCE  
REGARDING THE INVESTIGATION. [REDACTED] WITH  
THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGE (SEE REF B, PARA 6), [REDACTED]  
FEELS ITSELF CONSTRAINED IN MAKING HARSH PUBLIC  
COMMENTS. FURTHERMORE, BY NATURE [REDACTED] IS FAR  
LESS POLITICAL AND POLEMICAL THAN [REDACTED]  
  
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